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**Climate and people: the effect of the climate on shaping the people’s nature**

Final project of World of Britain

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8. **Introduction**

My final project’s paper is devoted to the impact of the country climate on national character development. I decided to focus on specific traits of British character, which in my opinion could be related to the nature, geographical and climatic characteristics of the Land.

While investigated the topic, I found a lot of interesting information and opinions about how British nation formed their insular vision and traditions, what characters helped them to survive and what heritage they transfer to the new generation. Apart of the climate to a large extent the typical traits of British people were influenced by historical events, which brits experienced.

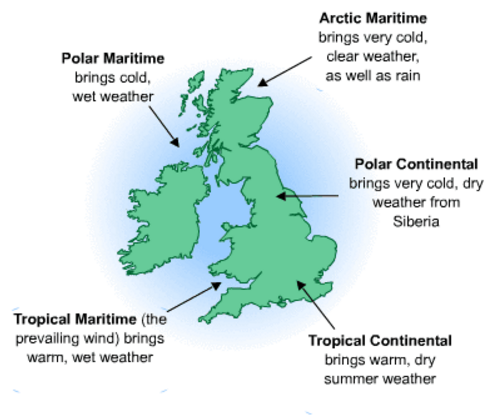
I also decided to make some sort of a comparison by expressing my opinion about the impact of Russian climate on the typical Russian character. I had to read some international resources to do this part of the work, I chose some widely spread stereotypes about Russians and tried to explain them from this perspective.

Besides of the northern in geographical respect location of Britain and Russia, such a choice was also determined by the fact about historical long-standing and diverse connections between England and Russia. It is known that in ancient Kiev at time of Yaroslave the Wise two Anglo-Saxon princes - the sons of Edmund Ironside, guested for a while. Harald, who died in England at the Battle of Hastings in 1066, was married to Yaroslav’s daughter, Elizabeth, whose hands he had long sought. The last Anglo-Saxon king Harold’s II daughter Gytha of Wessex fled through Denmark to Russia, where she became a wife of Vladimir Monomakh. The opening of the Northern Sea Route in 1553 established the strong and beneficial trade connections between the two countries. Therefore, The Great Britain and Russia are not that alien for each other.



1. **Some words about a climate of the United Kingdome**

The [British Isles](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Isles) are an archipelago off the northwest coast of [Europe](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Europe), consisting of the islands of [Great Britain](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Britain) and [Ireland](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ireland) along with smaller surrounding ones. Its position allows dry continental air from [Eurasia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eurasia) to meet wetter air from the [Atlantic Ocean](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atlantic_Ocean), which causes the weather to be highly variable, often changing many times during the day. The weather changes in the UK give the British endless and abundant source for small talk. Traditional English weather is rainy and humid,  in winter the temperature rarely drops below zero degrees Celsius, so the grass is green all year round. The most severe weather conditions are in the mountains of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. In the western part of the UK the climate is more humid than in the east, due to the prevailing winds from the Atlantic Ocean.

The British climate is significantly warmer than other regions on the same latitude, due to the warmth provided by the [Gulf Stream](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gulf_Stream). Temperatures do not often switch between great extremes, with warm summers and mild winters.

Coastal areas tend to be more temperate than inland areas, as the influence of the ocean is less acute. Valleys can be especially cold, as cool air collects in them during the winter. Fog is more common inland and on higher altitudes; mainly during winter and during the morning at times of high pressure. Rainfall varies across the Isles, with a general trend to more rain as you go west and in higher elevations. December and January are usually the wettest months. Spring, the period from March to May, is generally a calm, cool and dry season, particularly because the Atlantic has lost much of its heat throughout the autumn and winter. Temperatures can rise relatively high during a day, however tend to drop off again at night due to the cool oceans and the warm weather dependent solely on the sun.  Summer lasts from June to August and is the warmest and usually the sunniest season.  North Atlantic depressions are not as severe in summer but increase both in severity and frequency towards the end of the season. Climatic differences at this time of year are more influenced by latitude and temperatures are highest in southern and central areas and lowest in the north.

Autumn in the United Kingdom lasts from September to November. The season is notorious for being unsettled—as cool polar air moves southwards following the sun, it meets the warm air of the [tropics](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tropics) and produces an area of great disturbance. This combined with the warm ocean due to heating throughout the spring and summer, produces the unsettled weather of autumn. In addition, when the air is particularly cold temperatures on land may be colder than the ocean, resulting in significant amounts of [condensation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Condensation) and clouds which bring rain to the country.

**III. Stereotypes of the British character and the possible reasons**

The British national character is the result of the country's richest history, its traditions, and habits of behavior. It is a reflection of the characteristics of its climate, nature, geographical features. It is not easy to describe the national character; it might take to remind all facts of English history and culture to do this. However, we can speak about some characteristic features of the British character separately, carefully trying not to simplify or exaggerate facts.

What are the most known worldwide British characters? Self-control, reserved character, conservatism, law-obedience, pragmatism, patriotism, politeness, all of them are usually related to British people. As for the snobbism, another well-known characteristic, relates mostly to the time of British Imperia and linked to a great success of colonization.

In general, **tolerance** is a distinctive feature of the nation. Brits with enviable persistence overcome any life problems. They just do not pay attention to them and in no case complain about the difficulties. The English rarely complain about fate or circumstances. This quality was developed due to permanently changeable weather conditions (apart of the history of conquests). There is more sense to conserve the energy in such circumstances, than to ignite emotions and spend it quickly.

The need of paying more attention to caring about conservation of power sources and natural resources formed such other qualities as **thrift**, **reasonableness, scrupulousness,** and **pedantry**.

British **reticence** is the result of insular psychology due to the geographical isolation of England from the Continent. The British perceived things happening on the other side of the Channel as something that was happening on the other side of culture and civilization.

They British are deeply **individualistic**. Every English citizen prefers to live alone, as if he were on an island of his own. From one point of view this wish of solitude couldbe provoked by multiple conquests of the Land by Anglo-Saxons, romans, Normans and other invaders. The genome of British accumulated the dream of independency and peace. From the other point of view, British people don’t live in such severe conditions, like Russians of the north part of Russia do, for example, and they don’t need to gather together all the time just to survive. One can say that this feature could just remain in British sole.

**A good appetite** and **the preference to a good essential food** can be explained by the wet windy climate. The cool climate increases the strength and power of the body, stimulating greater appetite and metabolism.

**Calmness, self-control** - constant humidity dulls sensitivity and predisposes to slowness.

A feeling of depression is not that common in UK. The lack of sunny days is at a large extent compensated by the nearly permanently green grass. However, the **sense of humor**, especially a black one, is very typical for British. As for the green land, it is worth to mention that the cult of grass is one of the remarkable features of the English character. No matter how small a piece of privately owned land may be, it is usually regularly mowed and cultivated until it turns into a green carpet.

**Good imagination**, which reflects in British sense of humor and the number of worldwide well-known local poets and writers – can be explained by the  extremely diverse, especially considering the small size of the country nature. The landscape changes drastically: plains give way to mountains, mountains break off into the ocean, and the whole area is riddled by rivers, which, despite their small size, are perfect for navigation.

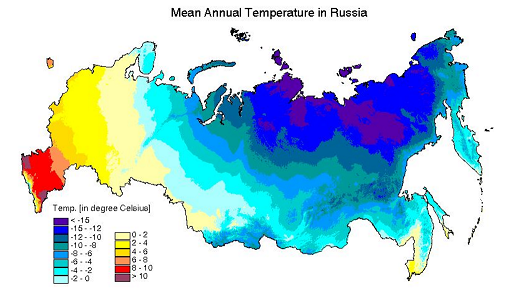
**Logical thinking** was well developed by the need to survive in severe conditions. The rational use of natural resources: raw materials, solar, water and air energy demanded the development of respective technologies and their further improvement. Moreover, the difficulty of transport connection, landscape's peculiarities and location on a island forced the British people to develop closed-cycle technologies.

**IV. A climate of Russia**

The climate of Russia is formed under the influence of several determining factors. The enormous size of the country and the remoteness of many areas from the sea result in the dominance of the [continental climate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Continental_climate), which is prevalent in European and Asian [Russia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russia) except for the tundra and the extreme southeast. Mountains in the south obstructing the flow of warm air masses from the [Indian Ocean](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_Ocean) and the plain of the west and north makes the country open to Arctic and Atlantic influences. South coastal cities in summer have the climate similar to tropics.

Due to the moderating influence of the [Atlantic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atlantic) or [Pacific](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pacific), most areas of the country in [European Russia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_Russia), in the south of West [Siberia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siberia) and in the south of the [Russian Far East](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russian_Far_East), including the cities of [Moscow](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moscow) and [Saint Petersburg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Petersburg), experience a [humid continental climate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Humid_continental_climate).  Most of Northern European Russia and [Siberia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siberia) between the [Scandinavian Peninsula](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scandinavian_Peninsula) and the [Pacific Ocean](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pacific_Ocean) has a [subarctic climate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Subarctic_climate), with extremely severe winters in the inner regions of Northeast Siberia.

Winter is dry compared to summer in many regions of East Siberia and the Far East, while other parts of the country experience more even precipitation across seasons. Winter precipitation in most parts of the country usually falls as [snow](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Snow).



**V.  Stereotypes about Russian national character and the possible reasons**

Since the country has been historically populated by many different nationalities, it is rather complicated to isolate particular characters common for each of them. However, the experience of many contemporaneous travelers and expats, working here, revealed a few commonly read features. These conclusions can be very doubtful, discussible and I don’t want to say that I think the same, but these are some separated out of some articles and blogs.

For some reason **laziness** is on top of these features. Winters in Russia are cold, windy and snowy. In old Russia people could do little during long winter months. But in spring there was a lot to be done, and in a short period of time. Perhaps, this explains why the Russians are often inactive for long periods of time and then show bursts of energy. As for the coastal warm regions, here laziness had always been provoked by the very fecund soil, which provided people with a meal with no big efforts.

**Hospitality** and **Russian collectivism** – unlike the British [individualism](http://www.multitran.ru/c/m.exe?t=249089_1_2&s1=%E8%ED%E4%E8%E2%E8%E4%F3%E0%EB%E8%E7%EC) it was impossible to survive in difficult climatic conditions alone, people lived together and supported each other. It also takes its roots in the Orthodox moral values. Russian inclination to work jointly for the common good, share what one have and rely on somebody's help was based on the feeling of kindred with other people. That is well reflected in the Russian language: a number of words denoting blood relations, such as sonny, mummy, grandpa, grandma, daddy, daughter, sister, etc. can be used when informally addressing somebody, even strangers. The most intimate word expressing deep feelings between soulmates is rodnoy. The Russians are known to be hospitable people. According to old traditions, a guest should always be welcomed with the symbol of life-giving food — bread and salt.

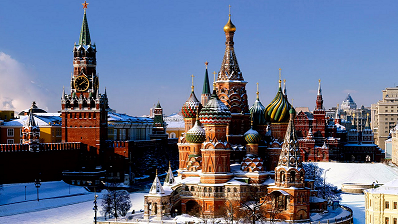
The harsh climate explains the Russians’ **strength** and their ability **to overcome hardships**. Climate has also made Russian **cautious**.

Russians are very **direct** or flat, like most part of Russian land and **emotional**. In Western culture, European culture maybe, emotion is considered to be on a lower level than reason. But in Russia, no, to be emotional, warm, lovable, maybe spiritual, in the full meaning of that word -- that is good.

**Pessimistic nature** - living without proper sunshine for nine months per year makes one think about life and gives a lot of time to do so. Russians tend to overanalyze things, expect pessimistic outcome even if things go rather well.  Long winter nights in the cold country predispose to self-reflection. It is quite rare for a Russian to be in a super elevated mood and see the life through rosy lenses. There are so many things, which can go wrong, even when everything looks fine.

"All that is done is done for the better" - one of the favorite Russian sayings goes. On the one hand, it implies optimistic and adventurous outlook, on the other hand, sheer fatalism and passivity - the opposites coming together in Russian people - drifting throughout life, they are **apt to adapt** to ever-changing circumstances rather than to oppose them. That feature is quite understandable if you take into account our history of upheavals and cataclysms.

**Revolutionists or conformists?** Russian patience seems endless as a Russian open country. This people have revealed its ability to endure any privations and severities - an almost superhuman ingeniousness in surviving inhuman living conditions. Moreover, one can suspect a sort of liking to bearing this cross, a certain pride for it. The spiritual experience of the Russian people not in the least proceeding from its sufferings, has given the world invaluable works of art and literature.



**VI. Conclusion**

The character of a people is a strong factor to define the fate of a country and the nation's government. A national character, which can partially change during the course of time, basically remains unchangeable within the people’s historic life. Apart of climatic conditions themselves, which determine life style and national character of people living in a particular location, the ease or difficulties in food producing or finding also impact people. If we compare Britain, where the grass is nearly always green and gives the yield and Russia, where the land is covered by the snow the most part of the year, we can see that British people shouldn’t have worried too much about what to eat even in very bad times. And in Russia the agriculture is always fight with the nature – cold or drought, this impact the human nature of course.

At the same time the influence of climate upon the character of a nation has sometimes been exaggerated; but it is undoubtedly of importance. The two extremes of heat and cold seem to have similar effect, for the people both of tropical and arctic climates alike lack energy and initiative.

In the arctic regions the excessive cold seems to numb men’s energies and render them torpid; and there nature is so niggardly, and man’s struggle for existence so severe, that it consumes all his energies, and leaves him exhausted for any other kind of effort.

It is significant that no great enterprising, conquer­ing, or highly civilized nation has arisen either in the torrid or the polar regions.

The dominant races are those who dwell in the temperate zones, where the climate, neither too hot nor too cold, is healthy and bracing, and where the struggle for existence is not so severe as to consume all a man’s energies, and yet severe enough to demand constant thought and exertion.

The geographical position of a country also has its influence upon the character of the inhabitants. The dwellers on fertile plains soon settle down to agriculture and trade, and to an or­dered and peaceful life. They grow wealthy, civilized and luxuri­ous. But the inhabitants of mountains and arid deserts, who have a harder struggle for existence, rarely settle down to a regular and peaceful life. They are very vigorous and independent, are great fighters, and have such a love of liberty that it is very difficult to subdue them.

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